

# Grant County Resilience Action Plan

Planning Support Provided by



# Contents

Executive Summary	3
Project Background	5
Risk Matrices	6
Grant County's Resilience	7
Economy	8
Business Network	12
Career & Technical Education Program	13
Industry Development	14
Natural Disasters	15
Prepare for Evacuation	18
Leadership	19
Map the Nonprofit & Local Government Ecosystem	21
Future Leader Mentoring Program	22
Behavioral Health	23
Behavioral Health Crisis Intervention	26
Behavioral Health Awareness	27
Housing	28
Housing Working Group	30

# Executive Summary

This plan to increase Grant County's resilience describes strategic actions that enable Grant County to anticipate risks, mitigate impacts, and recover rapidly. Grant County is in the Southwest Community Network through Rural Partners Network.

This plan is intended to compliment and be used alongside other strategic plans in the County, while identifying specific gaps and actions the County can take to enhance its resilience. Other important strategic planning documents include the Grant County Regional Water Plan, the Grant County Collaborative Community Senior Services Plan, the Grant County All Hazards Emergency Operations Plan, Grant County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, and the Town of Silver City Affordable Housing Plan.

There are four main areas of focus, all of which address a broader need for increased local capacity and for the development of the county's human capital.

## Economy

Grant County is experiencing economic headwinds due to its decreasing population, workforce participation decline, and the eventual closure of the mining industry (the County's economic base industry). With its high rates of poverty, the community is reliant on government transfer programs that are not guaranteed.

- **Establish a Business Network**, inviting local business owners to collaborate with each other, educators, and business support program providers, to discuss best practices, workforce needs, and coordinate programming.
- **Develop the program offerings for a Career & Technical Education program** in Grant County and create the project plan and next steps.
- **Develop new industries** by recruiting businesses to provide for unmet needs and demands in the market. Target businesses who will supply local market gaps, provide local jobs, and export goods or services to external markets.

## Natural Disasters

Severe weather has the potential to pose a significant threat to human health and safety, property, and infrastructure. Climate projections predict a decrease in total annual precipitation, so heavy rainfalls that do occur fall on drought-hardened soil, leading to flash floods. Climate change threatens to increase the frequency, extent, and severity of wildfires due to high temperatures and drought.

- **Prepare for evacuation** by inventorying which access roads are at risk of being cut off by fire or flood, and identify buildings to use as emergency shelters.

## Leadership

The socially vulnerable are often less prepared and have increased difficulty recovering after a disaster, and nonprofits in Grant County can play a significant role in helping socially vulnerable populations—making it especially important that local nonprofits and local governments are resilient. Grant County has 10% more tax-exempt organizations per capita than the state of New Mexico overall, and since community leaders in Grant County play a role in multiple organizations—the loss of any one leader could have major impacts on community organizations.

- **Map the Nonprofit & Local Government Ecosystem** to understand how many leaders need to be in the pipeline, and evaluate the overlap of leadership positions within the County.
- **Create a Future Leader Mentoring Program** to identify and mentor the next generation of community leaders in Grant County.

## Behavioral Health

Health is a vital aspect of community resilience, enabling individuals and societies to thrive amidst challenges. Behavioral health and healthy living conditions are key factors that contribute to individual and collective resilience, as they impact our ability to cope with stress, adapt to change, and maintain overall well-being.

- **Improve Behavioral Health Crisis Intervention** by establishing a behavioral health crisis triage center and mobile crisis response unit to provide specialized support to community members experiencing a behavioral health crisis.
- **Improve Behavioral Health Awareness** to reduce the behavioral health stigma so individuals feel more comfortable discussing their behavioral health, leading to earlier interventions and reducing rates of suicide and self-harm.

## Housing

Healthy living conditions are vital for individuals to thrive both physically and mentally. Ensuring healthy living conditions through affordable and accessible housing is essential for fostering the optimal growth, development, and happiness of individuals within a community.

- **Establish a Housing Working Group** to help Grant County be proactive about addressing its housing needs by fostering collaboration and driving meaningful action toward addressing the housing needs of the community—such as facilitating planning, advocating for policies, and leading initiatives to support housing development and rehabilitation.

# Project Background

Community resilience is the ability to anticipate risks, mitigate impacts and recover rapidly. To grow, evolve and thrive in the face of change and challenges.

Freeport-McMoRan sponsored this Grant County Resilience Action Plan to help the community identify its most significant risks and to create action plans to preemptively mitigate these risks and enhance overall community resilience. Community partners—including Grant County, the Grant County Community Foundation, the United Way, and the Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments—supported planning efforts through identifying local stakeholders to interview, coordinating meetings, and providing input on the risks, actions, and project leads presented in this plan.

Risks, or shocks and disruptions that could negatively impact residents and public and private operations, were identified relating to the Economy, Natural Disasters, Leadership, Behavioral Health, and Housing as (1) likely to occur or already occurring in Grant County, (2) likely to cause a major impact on the County and community members, and (3) within the community’s ability to mitigate.

This plan outlines strategic actions to enhance Grant County’s resilience to these risks—enabling the community to anticipate, mitigate, and recover from or avoid shocks. Each strategy includes specific actions for community leaders and groups to take help the county build its resilience and ensure a more sustainable future.



Photo: Better City

# Risk Matrices

Interviewed community members provided insights on potential community risks, ranked on this Severity Matrix on the likelihood of occurrence and the severity of impact. The potential risks in the upper right quadrant (shown in red) are the most likely to occur and have the most severe consequences.

The severity rankings are plotted against the community’s ability to mitigate or prevent negative outcomes in the Ability to Mitigate Matrix. The impacts highlighted in bold are directly addressed in this plan.

Likelihood to Occur	Severity of Impact			
	Low	Medium	Major	Catastrophic
Occurring	Blight	Homelessness	Behavioral Health & Substance Abuse	Loss of Major Employer (Mine)
		Domestic Violence	Deterioration of Housing	Lack of Human Capital
Probable	Lack of Funding for Civic Groups	Deterioration of Infrastructure	Destruction due to Wildfire/ Flood	Lack of Emergency Shelter
Possible		Business Closures	Lack of Coordination between Civic Groups	Disaster that Impacts Access to Roads

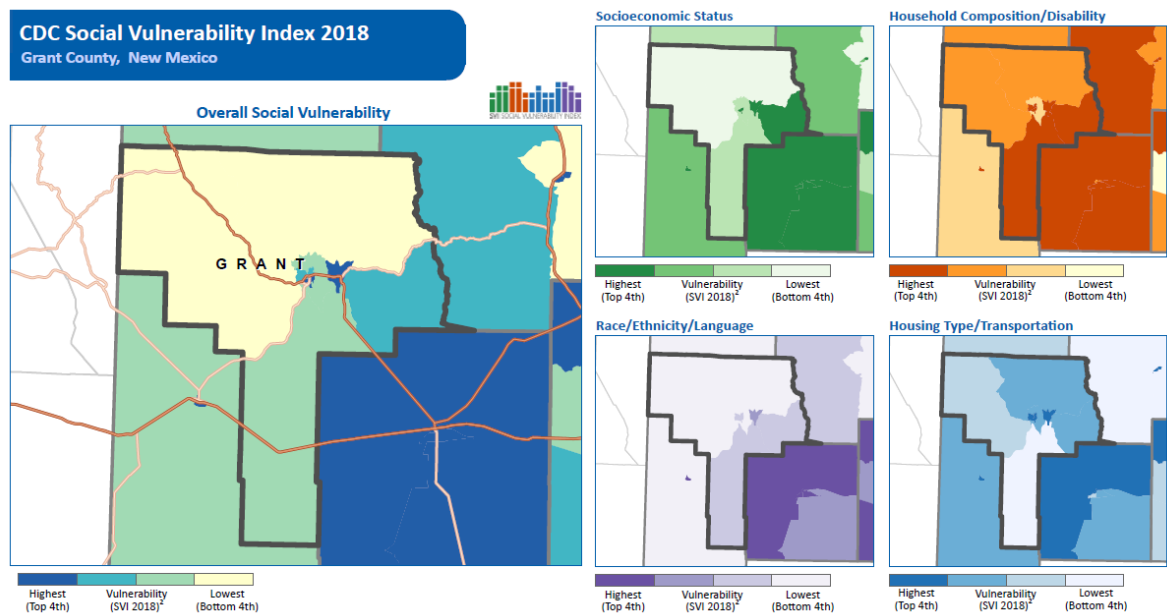
Recommendations in the Action Plan address risks that were ranked as severe with medium or high ability to mitigate. These are addressed in the action plan under **Economy** (Loss of Major Employer [Mine] and Lack of Human Capital for Businesses), **Natural Disaster** (Lack of Emergency Shelter and Disaster that Impacts Access to Roads), **Leadership** (Lack of Human Capital for Nonprofits, and Lack of Coordination between Civic Groups), **Behavioral Health** (Behavioral Health and Substance Abuse), and **Housing** (Deterioration of Housing).

Severity of Impact	Ability to Mitigate		
	Low	Medium	High
Severe	Behavioral Health & Substance Abuse	Loss of Major Employer (Mine)	Lack of Human Capital
Major	Homelessness	Blight	Lack of Emergency Shelter
	Domestic Violence	Destruction due to Wildfire/ Flood	Disaster that Impacts Access to Roads
			Deterioration of Housing
Moderate		Deterioration of Infrastructure	Lack of Coordination between Civic Groups
Low		Business Closures	Lack of Funding for Civic Groups

# Grant County's Resilience

The degree to which a community exhibits certain social conditions may affect that community's ability to prevent human suffering and financial loss in the event of disaster. These factors describe a community's social vulnerability. The CDC Social Vulnerability Index maps the geographic areas that will most likely need support before, during, and after a hazardous event. Vulnerability rankings are analyzed by census tracts on 15 social factors such as unemployment, minority status, disability, poverty, vehicle access, etc.

According to the CDC Social Vulnerability Index, social vulnerability is highest in the mining district, followed by Silver City, and the southeast portions of the county.



Each strategy in this plan includes:

- A description of the purpose of the strategy.
- Action steps to enact the strategy.
- Lead—the organization responsible for implementation of the strategy.
- Timeline—designation of short-, medium-, or long-term.
- Resources—funding sources or other programs that might assist with implementation of the strategy.

The overarching purpose of each of these strategies is to enhance capacity in Grant County—providing residents, businesses, and organizations with the skills, capacity, and resources they need to prosper in good times, persevere through hard times, and recover in the aftermath of a disaster.

# Economy

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When the economy declines, companies are less profitable. Jobs and wages decline, hurting employees and shareholders. The decrease in wages and tighter profits in a declining economy diminishes government revenues—less funding to spend on public services, infrastructure, and government workers' wages.



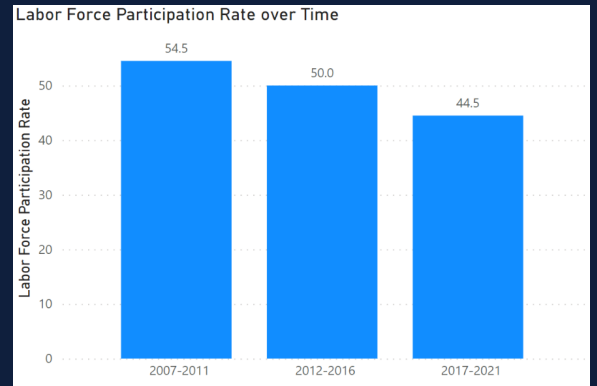
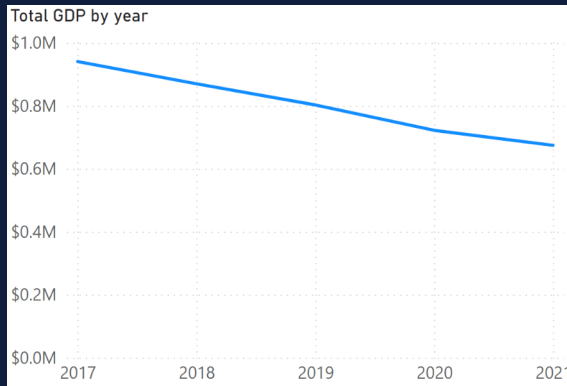
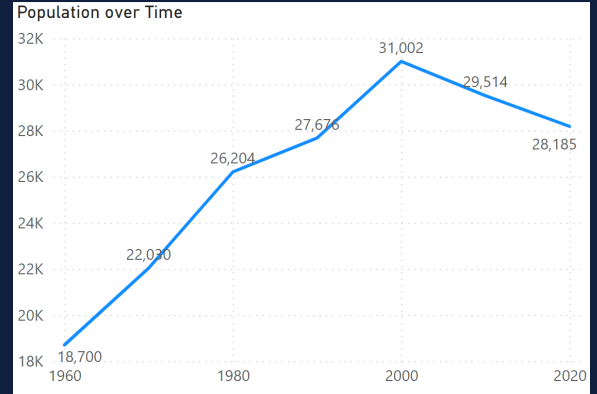
# Likelihood of Occurrence

Variables that indicate a decline in economic activity include Population & Workforce Decline, Decline in Major Industries, and Reliance on Government Transfers.

## Population & Workforce Decline

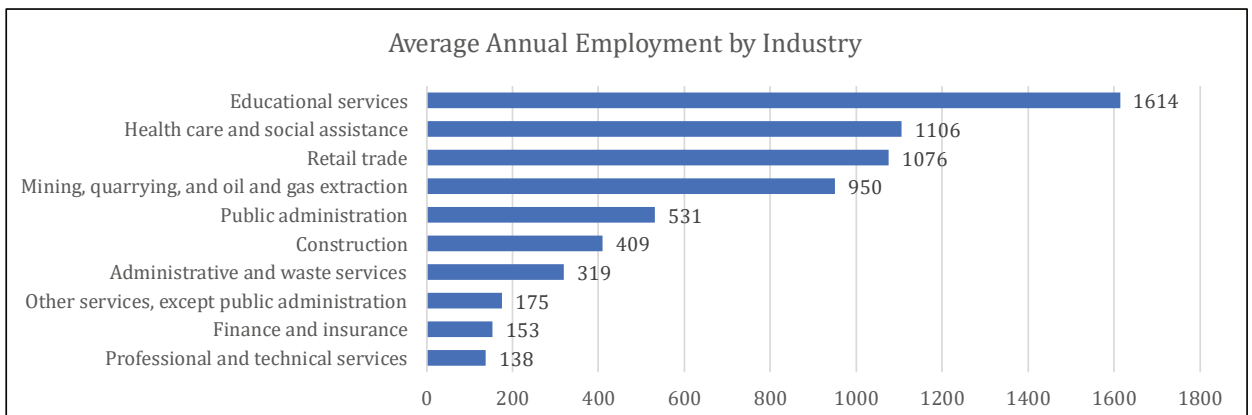
Grant County's population has steadily declined since 2000, a decrease of more than 2,800. This is caused by natural decrease and domestic out-migration.

The labor force participation rate is 46%, with most of the population (54%) not in the labor force. This is even true of the prime-age rate, which lags 17 points behind the national average.



## Decline in Major Industries

The largest industries in Grant County are Education (7 establishments that employ 1,614), Healthcare and Social Assistance (150 establishments that employ 1,106), Retail Trade (85 establishments employ 1,076), and Mining (7 establishments that employ 950). These four industries dominate employment and wages in the County. Approximately two-thirds of the County's Gross Domestic Product output is attributable to these four industries. The loss of any of them would have a significant impact on the County's economy. The mining industry in particular represents a lion's share of the wealth generated and contained within Grant County.



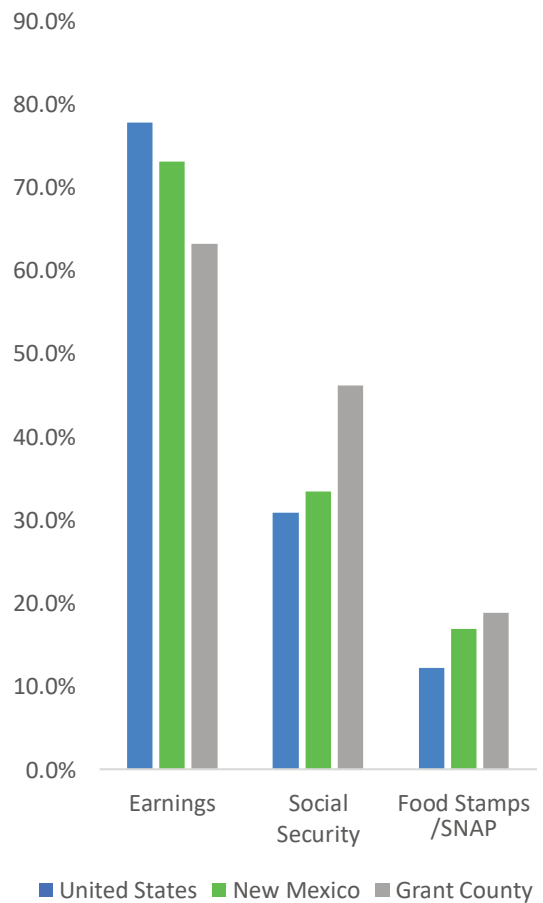
Freeport-McMoRan’s operations generated nearly \$150 million in economic benefits for Grant County in 2021. This includes \$112.9 million in direct impacts through wages, business taxes, and vendor purchases, and \$36.8 million in indirect impacts through spending from employees, tax revenues, pension income, and vendor purchases.

Freeport projects the Tyrone mine to close in 2027, and the Chino mine to close in 2039. Freeport is actively exploring, which may result in an extension of the life of existing mines; yet mining operations, however expansive and complex, are not permanent. Eventually, once the most accessible and valuable materials are extracted, the mines will be closed.

**Reliance on Government Transfers**

Government transfers are an important component of incomes in Grant County. In the US, approximately 78% of households have earnings as a source of income (earnings in this case represents revenues from wages, salaries, dividends, and rental incomes); households in Grant County with earnings is much lower, at 60% of households. Transfer payments are significantly over-represented in the County, with social security and Food Stamp/SNAP benefits showing much higher utilization compared to the US average. For example, food Stamp/SNAP utilization is 75% higher, while social security utilization is 55% higher. This represents a risk to the community since the Social Security fund is expected to be exhausted in 2033 , and Congress has yet to define a strategy whereby the fund will be replaced or rescued, meaning that the program could get cut or significantly reduced. If social security were cut, an estimated \$104.6 million in total household incomes would disappear from the County (this is approximately equal to the total wages generated by the mining industry in 2021).

Sources of Income



**Water Infrastructure**

Water infrastructure is essential for economic development, as access to clean and reliable water is crucial for industry, agriculture, and human consumption. Adequate water infrastructure ensures a consistent supply of water for these purposes.

The Grant County Regional Water Plan outlines a regional project to improve and increase access to public water supplies that currently serve approximately 26,000 people in central Grant County. The project includes the development of a new well field near Grant County Airport and the construction of an Inter-Community Pipeline.

# Anticipated Impact

Economic growth in a region is dependent on its ability to export goods. Primary employers are businesses that sell goods and services outside of the region, bringing new wealth into the region. Secondary employers circulate that wealth throughout the local economy, but they depend on the existence of the primary employers—so the loss of a primary employer causes a ripple effect of business closures. The magnitude of the ripple effect is estimated using regional multipliers, where a multiplier is the estimated impact of the industry on the broader economy.

There is an estimated multiplier effect of 3.9 total created jobs for each new mining job in Grant County (one new mining job plus 2.9 new secondary jobs to support it). The loss of the mine will potentially cause both a loss of employment for those working for the mine (950 employees per the most recent report) plus the loss of an estimated additional 2,230 jobs spread across all other industries in the local economy as local businesses supported by the mine and its employees lose a significant portion of their income and patronage.

# Resilience Strategies

Action	Lead	Resources	Timeline
Business Network	Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments	<a href="#">USDA – Rural Business Development Grants</a>	Short
		<a href="#">NM EDD – Job Training Incentive Program</a>	
		<a href="#">Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act</a>	
		Soft skill training programs such as <a href="#">SeeMore Impact Labs</a> , <a href="#">Coursera</a> , and <a href="#">edX</a>	
		<a href="#">New Mexico Workforce Connection</a>	
		<a href="#">Creative Industries Division of the Economic Development Department</a>	
		<a href="#">NMFA - Rural Enterprise Act</a>	
		<a href="#">NMFA – Smart Money</a>	
		<a href="#">NMFA – Economic Development Tax Credits</a>	
Career & Technical Education	Career & Technical Education Action Committee	<a href="#">Frost Foundation Grant</a>	Medium
		<a href="#">Washington Federal Foundation, Washington Federal Bank</a>	
		<a href="#">RBC Foundation</a>	
		<a href="#">New Mexico Dept. Of Transportation – Local Technical Assistance Program</a>	
Industry Development	Grant County	<a href="#">Economic Development &amp; Family Asset Building Grant from the McCune Charitable Foundation</a>	Long
		<a href="#">USDA Rural Innovation Stronger Economy</a>	
		<a href="#">Economic Development Administration</a>	

# Business Network

The 2012 Grant County Economic Development Master Plan identified a need to assist startups. In 2019, the County launched a local CO.STARTERS® program funded by a USDA REDI grant. Since then, more than 56 businesses have graduated from CO.STARTERS® 10-week program to launch a local cohort of entrepreneurial businesses in Grant County. Out of these Alumni, 30 businesses were started, and as of January 2023, 27 of these new businesses were still active.

A local business network that includes local business owners, educators, and business support program providers would facilitate discussions on issues to address—such as workforce soft skill development and business expansion support.

## Workforce Soft Skill Development

According to the survey of business owners in Grant County conducted by Angelou Economics in 2012, 86% are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the work ethic of the local workforce. Soft skills are behaviors and habits (such as collaboration, dependability, time management, and communication) that help people succeed at work. Programs that teach soft skills can be shared within the local business network, and employers can collaborate to provide soft skill training available from organizations such as [SeeMore Impact Labs](#), [Coursera](#), and [edX](#).

## Workforce Training

Ensure business owners know about the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#) that help cover costs of training employees on the job, and other programs available through the [New Mexico Workforce Connection](#) and the [Creative Industries Division of the Economic Development Department](#).

## Business Expansion Support

Up to 80% of job growth in any community is generated by the expansion of businesses already located there.

The local business network can share information and ideas for expansion support; such as SBDC mentoring, Chamber of Commerce promotion, business expansion consultant recommendations, and B2B opportunities within the County.

## Action Steps

- Establish a Business Network comprising local business owners, educators, and business support program providers.
- Meeting agendas should include best practices, issues and concerns, expansion opportunities, workforce and training needs, and coordination of programming.
- Continue to fund CO.STARTERS®.

<b>Lead</b>
Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments
<b>Resources</b>
<a href="#">USDA – Rural Business Development Grants</a>
<a href="#">NM EDD – Job Training Incentive Program</a>
<a href="#">Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act</a>
Soft skill training programs such as <a href="#">SeeMore Impact Labs</a> , <a href="#">Coursera</a> , and <a href="#">edX</a>
<a href="#">New Mexico Workforce Solutions</a>
<a href="#">Creative Industries Division of the Economic Development Department</a>
<a href="#">NMFA – Smart Money</a>
<a href="#">NMFA – Economic Development Tax Credits</a>

# Career & Technical Education Program

A Career & Technical Education training program is in high demand in grant county and has been for at least a decade:

- 27 out of 34 parents surveyed in Grant County expressed strong or very strong support for a career and technical training institution (2012 Feasibility Study for a Grant County Career and Technical Education Center).
- The three most important economic issues facing Grant County (according to the 4,830 responses to the 2012 Community Health Council Assessment survey) include workforce development (53%), job skill training (44%), and vocational training facility for children and adults (28%).

There is already some local vocational and technical programming, including: Forward New Mexico, Western New Mexico University’s Community College Workforce Development Certificate Programs, Doña Ana Community College career and technical programs, and proprietary educational programs offering certificates are provided in the County for cosmetology, computer training, mine safety and security. However, additional coordination is needed to develop a robust technical training program that can address current needs while building out workforce pathways that are sustainable for the community’s industry clusters.

Silver Consolidated received an Innovation Zone award that will help fund the career and technical education program at the high school.

### Action Steps

- Establish a Career & Technical Education Action Committee comprised of WNMU, Silver Schools, Aldo Leopold, Cobre Schools, and trade skill employers. Identify ways to collaborate to develop a training facility that covers the region.
- Create a short-term project plan, utilizing an incremental approach that scales based on labor demand.
  - Develop a ‘prototype’ vo-tech program that can be implemented in existing high schools in the short-term. These prototype programs should require minimal overhead investment and be flexible in their offerings each year to explore a variety of approaches.
  - Use data from registration for these small-scale programs to inform scope and scale for a stand-alone vo-tech school.
  - Collaborate with partners across the region to prevent duplicative programming.
- Create a long-term project plan, including funding strategy, budget and specific needs for the construction and equipment of the facility, program development, and student capacity.
  - Create a proforma with the project budget and operating costs and plan.

<b>Lead</b>
Career & Technical Education Action Committee
<b>Resources</b>
<u>Frost Foundation Grant</u>
<u>Washington Federal Foundation, Washington Federal Bank</u>
<u>Economic Development Administration</u>
<u>RBC Foundation</u>
<u>New Mexico Dept. Of Transportation – Local Technical Assistance Program</u>
<u>NMFA - Public Revolving Loan Fund</u>

# Industry Development

Recruiting new businesses that provide for unmet needs and demands in the market can foster economic growth in a region; especially if recruitment efforts are targeted at businesses that will:

1. Fill local market gaps, providing access to goods or services that enhance the quality of life for community members.
2. Provide local jobs, especially by supplying jobs that align with existing workforce skills.
3. Export goods or services to external markets, contributing to the region’s productivity and increase capital in the local market.

Business types to consider pursuing include:

- Businesses that would fill a market gap.
- Businesses that utilize the skills of mine employees. By attracting industries that utilize the existing skill base of local workers, the community would facilitate workers finding replacement jobs within the County quickly if the mines close or during downturns in the business cycle.
- Experiential attraction—something that appeals to and attracts people from within both the County and the surrounding region.

## Action Steps

- Conduct analysis to identify market gaps to fill community needs and create a new market within the region. Analyze which industries in the County’s Economic Development Strategic Plan would fulfill this (such as solar and geothermal energy production). Utilize New Mexico Workforce Connection’s labor market information, [U.S. Census J2J Explorer](#), or a data provider such as Lightcast.
- Conduct an analysis on what businesses would utilize the skills of mine employees, including use of similar equipment and tools.
- Create a target list of desired businesses and conduct outreach to recruitment targets and to targets for business expansion support.
- A project for Silver City to take the lead on: Conduct a feasibility study to identify market potential for turning the Big Ditch in Silver City into a destination attraction.
  - If determined feasible, pursue [funding](#) for project design and construction.
  - Engage an urban design firm to create a small area plan for the Big Ditch.

<b>Lead</b>
Grant County & Chamber of Commerce
<b>Resources</b>
<a href="#">Economic Development &amp; Family Asset Building Grant from the McCune Charitable Foundation</a>
<a href="#">USDA – Rural Innovation Stronger Economy</a>
Economic Development Administration

**“Market-creating innovation...often serves as a catalyst and foundation for creating sustained economic development.”**

– Clayton Christensen

# Natural Disasters

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Natural disasters include all types of severe weather, which have the potential to pose a significant threat to human health and safety, property, and infrastructure. Natural disasters occur both seasonally and without warning, subjecting the community to periods of insecurity, disruption, and economic loss.

New Mexico, like the rest of the planet, is undergoing significant climate change. The southwestern United States is particularly sensitive to changes in temperature and thus vulnerable to drought, as even a small decrease in water availability in this already arid region can stress natural systems and further threaten water supplies.

“New Mexico’s climate is getting hotter and drier, driven by regional and global warming trends. This means earlier springs, hotter summers, and less predictable winters. Precipitation patterns are also changing, with more intense droughts and a greater proportion of precipitation falling as rain rather than snow.”

– Union of Concerned Scientists

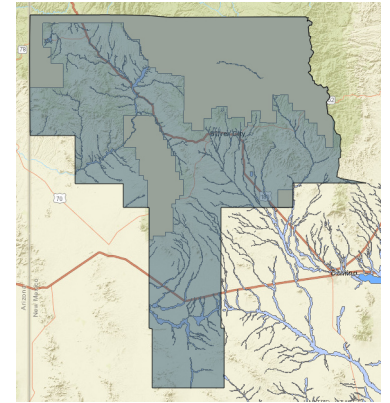
Resilience to natural disasters includes taking steps to reduce the harm caused by floods or wildfires and having a plan to keep people safe during a disaster and in its aftermath.

# Likelihood of Occurrence

## Flood

90% of natural disasters within the United States involve flooding. Consequently, floods inflict more economic damage and loss of life and property than any other natural hazard. In Grant County, there were 51 riverine flooding events from 1996-2019 (24 years), an annualized frequency of 2.1 events per year.

New Mexicans are accustomed to extreme rainfall; however, climate projections suggest that even as total annual precipitation decreases in places like the Southwest, the heaviest annual rainfall events may become more intense (Walsh et al. 2014). When heavier precipitation falls on drought-hardened or wildfire-transformed soil, which has a reduced ability to absorb moisture, more of the water runs off into streams instead of percolating into the ground (Chief et al. 2008). This can lead to flash floods, as occurred in 2014, when 90% of New Mexico experienced an extreme or exceptional drought (Crimmins et al. 2014).

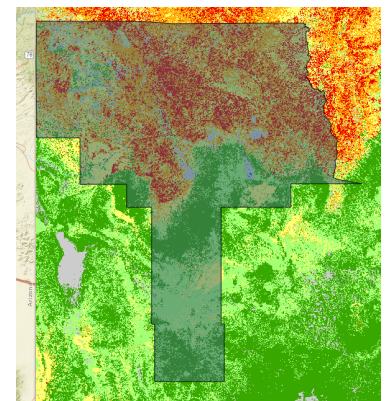


The New Mexico Climate Risk Map shows areas of Grant County that FEMA has identified as having risk of flooding, which can vary in size and depth depending on the severity of the flooding.

## Fire

The southwest is the fastest warming part of the country, and in New Mexico the average annual temperature has increased about 2.7°F over 45 years. Global climate models project an average temperature increase across the state of New Mexico of between 5° and 7°F over the next 50 years.

Multiple studies have found that climate change has already led to an increase in wildfire season length, wildfire frequency, and burned area. The wildfire season has lengthened in many areas due to factors including warmer springs, longer summer dry seasons, and drier soils and vegetation. Similarly, climate change threatens to increase the frequency, extent, and severity of fires through increased temperatures and drought.



The New Mexico Climate Risk Map shows most of Grant County has high (orange) or very high (red) risk of wildfire. FEMA's Hazard type Risk Index scores reflect a community's relative risk for a variety of hazard types. The Hazard Risk Index Scores for Grant County show wildfire as the highest risk for a natural disaster to strike the County—with a 1.4% chance per year.



# Anticipated Impact

A natural disaster can have devastating effects on the community. When a natural disaster occurs, the priority is ensuring the safety of community members. Major needs in a disaster include:

- Coordination and communication between first responders, community leaders, community members, and disaster response organizations (such as the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security, FEMA, and the Forest Service).
- Access to roads to enable evacuation of the area. Both floods and wildfires can potentially cut-off or wash out roads, increasing the level of risk for community members living in remote areas where there is only a single access road.
- Emergency shelter to provide a safe place to congregate and stay during a disaster event.

# Resilience Strategies

Action	Lead	Resources	Timeline
Prepare for Evacuation	<u>Grant County Emergency Management Department</u>	FEMA – <u>Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities</u>	Short
		FEMA – <u>Preparedness Grants</u>	
		FEMA – <u>Hazard Mitigation Grant Program</u>	
		United Way & Community Foundation – <u>Crisis Fund</u>	
		Red Cross – <u>Item Donation Collection</u>	



Photo: Steve Buisinne

# Prepare for Evacuation

Many kinds of emergencies can cause evacuations. In some cases, residents may have a day or two to prepare while other situations might call for an immediate evacuation.

Community members need clear roads to evacuate an area; however, both floods and wildfires can potentially cut off or wash out roads. This is primarily a risk for community members living in remote areas where there is only a single access road. For members who are able to get out of the disaster area, emergency shelters are needed to provide a safe place for community members to congregate and stay.

## Action Steps

- Hold a round table meeting to inform stakeholders and community members about the new County Emergency Plan.
- Inventory each community in the County (municipalities and unincorporated areas) to determine which ones have limited-access roads.
  - Identify what level of risk these roads have of being cut off by fire or flood.
  - Identify if there are potential mitigations (extra bank support to nearby river, firebreak along road, etc.) and assign these mitigation efforts to appropriate County and municipal departments to enact.
  - Add construction of additional egress road(s) to the County’s transportation plan, as needed.
- Identify which buildings within the County can be used as emergency shelters.
  - Ensure there is a clear line of communication with building owners to be used in times of emergency, and that community members are informed of what the emergency shelters are in the County.
  - Plan for communication with individuals that have unique communication needs—such as those who are hearing impaired.
- Inventory animal shelters, and what types of animals they can hold.
  - Be prepared to communicate where residents can take household pets and livestock in a disaster.
- In a disaster, Red Cross is the entity who would accept and distribute donations of items, and the United Way would set up a community fund to accept and distribute monetary donations.

<b>Lead</b>
Grant County Emergency Management Department
<b>Resources</b>
FEMA – Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities
FEMA – Preparedness Grants
FEMA – Hazard Mitigation Grant Program
United Way & Community Foundation – Crisis Fund
Red Cross – Item Donation Collection

# Leadership

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The Baseline Resilience Indicators for Communities (BRIC) uses a set of 49 indicators that represent six types of resilience: social, economic, community capital, institutional capacity, housing/infrastructure, and environmental.

According to BRIC, communities in Grant County, NM have a Relatively Low ability to prepare for anticipated natural hazards, adapt to changing conditions, and withstand and recover rapidly from disruptions when compared to the rest of the U.S.

The low Community Resilience score indicates that community members will need additional support to weather changes and disruptions, as the socially vulnerable are often less prepared and have more difficulty recovering. Civic groups (including nonprofits, associations, and political entities) in Grant County can play a significant role in helping socially vulnerable populations—making it especially important that local nonprofits themselves are resilient.

# Likelihood of Occurrence

Grant County has 159 tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organizations (nonprofits), per the IRS. Of those, an estimated 62 are actively functioning and have economic impacts (using organizations with non-zero revenues based on their most recent tax filing).

# Anticipated Impact

According to community input, community leaders in Grant County are engaged in multiple organizations—with any one leader potentially serving on the boards of several different organizations at one time. Not only does this cause burnout among those serving, but it also means that the loss of any community leader via retirement or transfer would impact a wide variety of organizations.

Stakeholders indicated that identifying potential areas of collaboration between local nonprofits and local and regional public agencies would make it easier to identify and engage stakeholders who could help move projects forward.

# Resilience Strategies

Action	Lead	Resources	Timeline
Map the Nonprofit & Local Government Ecosystem	Grant County Community Foundation	Freeport Site Investment Fund	Short
Future Leader Mentoring Program	The Commons	Vulcan Materials Company Foundation	Medium
		Charitable Giving by Basin Electric Power Cooperative	

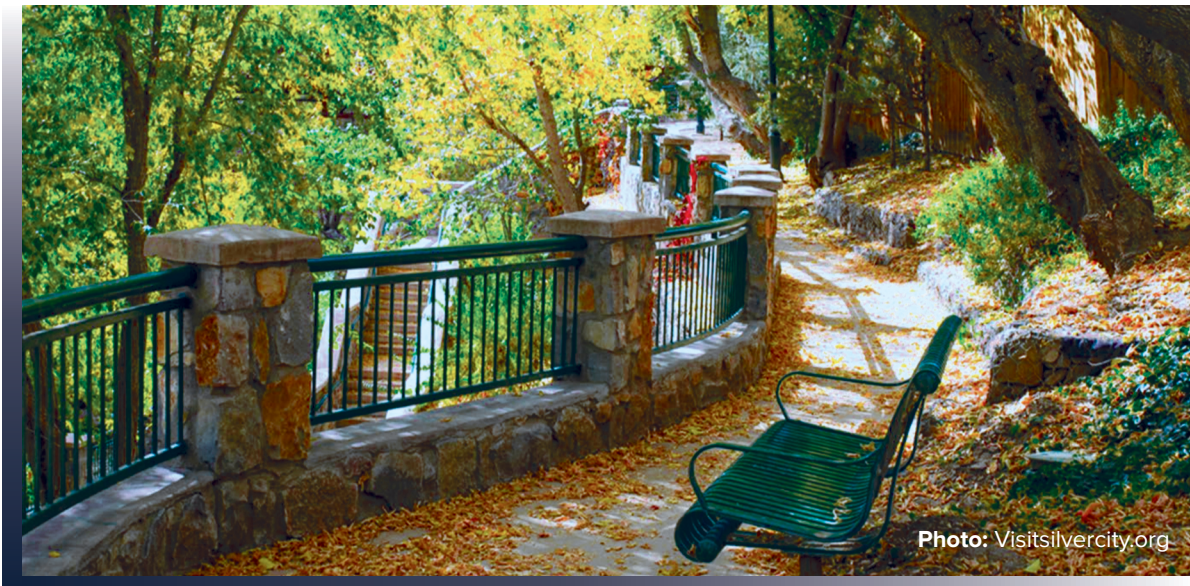


Photo: Visitsilvercity.org

# Map the Nonprofit & Local Government Ecosystem

Community leaders wear lots of hats—loss of any one leader in Grant County could potentially impact multiple organizations. To understand how many leaders need to be in the pipeline, the County needs to know (1) how many boards (including elected officials in public bodies) are in the county, (2) how many leadership positions are on each board, and (3) how many people will be needed to fill these rolls.

## Action Steps

- Map the ecosystem of local nonprofits and local government departments.
  - Delineate the missions, responsibilities and roles filled by the various nonprofits and government departments to identify which organizations are filling what community needs. This analysis should include public programs as well.
  - Evaluate the overlap of how many leaders fill roles on multiple boards to quantify the leadership pipeline needs within the County.
- Identify opportunities for duplicative roles to be consolidated (for example, consider utilizing a shared grant writer for multiple organizations).
- Identify opportunities to coordinate planning efforts and project implementation.

<b>Lead</b>
Grant County Community Foundation
<b>Resource</b>
Freeport Site Investment Fund



# Future Leader Mentoring Program

A Future Leader Mentoring Program can be used to prepare the next generation of community leaders in Grant County. The program’s objectives would be to (1) identify potential future leaders from the 20- and 30-year-old residents of Grant County, and (2) facilitate their participation in community organizations through a mentorship program where these future leaders work directly with current community leaders in a variety of organizations and departments.

## Potential Program Elements

- **Mentor Matching:** Assign participants to experienced leaders who are willing to share their knowledge and experiences. Mentors would be responsible for:
  - Conduct meeting with mentee at start, middle, and end of program to discuss goals, interests, and experience of mentee.
  - Inform the program facilitator what information, introductions, and skill-building exercises would appeal to their mentee.
- **Information & Introductions:** Invite participants to meetings where they can:
  - Be introduced to community leaders, and observe them in action.
  - Conduct informational interviews with community leaders.
  - Leverage existing activities as leadership training opportunities.
- **Skill-Building:** Host skill-building exercises, such as role-playing, case studies, and simulations to help participants develop and practice leadership skills.

The Commons have already identified National programs with established curriculum and programming that could be easily adopted in Grant County. In order to launch these programs, The Commons require funding to support a dedicated staff person who would run these local leadership programs.

## Action Steps

- Apply for multi-year grants to fund a staff position to serve as the program coordinator.
- Recruit program participants.
  - Coordinate with universities and other entities to recruit.
  - Conduct advertising campaign on social media to recruit other community members (Gen Z’s primarily use Snapchat, TikTok, and Instagram, while Millennials primarily use Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram).
  - Target recruitment of Spanish speakers to participate in the program.

<b>Lead</b>
The Commons
<b>Resources</b>
<u>Vulcan Materials Company Foundation</u>
<u>Charitable Giving by Basin Electric Power Cooperative</u>

# Behavioral Health

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Health is an indispensable component of community resilience, providing the foundation for individuals and societies to thrive in the face of adversity. A resilient community is one that not only withstands and recovers from challenges, but also fosters the well-being of its members. Within this framework, mental health and healthy living conditions emerge as critical elements. Behavioral health plays a profound role in shaping individual and collective resilience, as it influences our ability to cope with stress, adapt to change, and maintain overall well-being.

# Likelihood of Occurrence

## Health & Behavioral Health

Grant County is close to the national average on several markers of community health, and is somewhat better than the state of New Mexico on many of these markers (see table below).

However, Grant County grapples with pervasive behavioral health challenges. While statistically the County data shows that only 14% of adults have frequent mental distress, the rate is likely much higher, as evidenced by the statistics for deaths caused by despair and suicide, both of which are much higher than the state and national averages.

Metric	Grant County	U.S.	NM
Hospital Bed Availability /1K	0.9	1.9	3.0
Population with No Health Insurance	9%	11%	12%
Adults with Recent Preventive Care Visit	64%	74%	67%
Heart Disease Prevalence	5%	6%	5%
Life Expectancy	77	77	78
Adults with Frequent Mental Distress	14%	16%	15%
Deaths of Despair /100K	93	47	79
Deaths due to Suicide /100K	29	14	24

Sources: [US News](#) & [County Health Rankings](#)

## Anticipated Impact

Disasters and other social shocks can increase and exacerbate domestic violence, homelessness, and substance abuse—making County residents vulnerable to these challenges increasing in times of disaster. “Analysis of the data from various studies indicates that certain co-occurring factors are pivotal in determining which natural disaster survivors are likely to encounter issues with alcohol or drugs. Specifically, survivors trapped in poverty and lacking economic opportunity are highly vulnerable to chemical dependency after such exposures, as are those with a previous history of drug or alcohol abuse.”

Even without a disaster, behavioral health issues are already severely impacting the community. Lives of residents are disrupted, and sometimes destroyed by these issues; businesses lose workers to these challenges, and when individuals are in crisis, pressure is placed on first responders and the medical system. These issues are also affecting the county’s economy, as evidenced by low workforce participation and high government transfer utilization rates. It is urgent for the County to address issue of mental health to ensure the community can remain economically and socially resilient.



# Resilience Strategies

Action	Lead	Resources	Timeline
Behavioral Health Crisis Intervention	The Center for Health Innovation	<a href="#"><u>SAMHASA – Cooperative Agreements for Innovative Community Crisis Response Partnerships</u></a>	Medium
		<a href="#"><u>SAMHASA – Resiliency in Communities After Stress and Trauma</u></a>	
		<a href="#"><u>Mental Health First Aid</u></a>	
		<a href="#"><u>The New Mexico Foundation – Sustaining New Mexico Fund</u></a>	
Behavioral Health Awareness	Grant County	<a href="#"><u>Medline Community Impact Grant Program</u></a>	Short
		<a href="#"><u>SAMHSA – Advancing Wellness &amp; Resiliency in Education</u></a>	
		<a href="#"><u>U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services – Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children’s Health</u></a>	



# Behavioral Health Crisis Intervention

Currently, individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis must seek help at the emergency room—however, due to the service’s design to prioritize patients in immediate physical danger, the emergency room is not an optimal setting for addressing behavioral health emergencies.

A more effective approach would involve redirecting these individuals to a dedicated behavioral health crisis intervention triage center. The triage center would provide specialized support, and have staff of trained behavioral health professionals who can provide immediate care, assessment, and intervention tailored to individuals experiencing behavioral health crises.

Many behavioral health crises are dealt with by first responders, who may not be adequately trained or equipped to diffuse behavioral health crises. A mobile crisis response unit would divert individuals experiencing behavioral health crises from law enforcement, and provide the specialized behavioral health support needed in a crisis situation.

## Action Steps

- Create a steering committee that can coordinate regional behavioral health projects across the tri-county region of Grant, Luna, and Hidalgo.
- Develop partnerships with between behavioral health providers, emergency medical services, law enforcement, hospital, and community organizations. Establish formal partnerships and develop protocols for effective coordination and referrals.
- Contact SAMHSA DTAC staff to request disaster behavioral health training(s) or consultations.
- Pursue grants to fund the launch of the triage center and mobile crisis response unit.
- Recruit and train staff with comprehensive training in crisis intervention techniques, de-escalation strategies, trauma-informed care, and cultural competence.
- Launch a public awareness campaign to inform the community about the availability and benefits of the behavioral health triage center and mobile crisis response unit. Collaborate with local media, community organizations, schools, and healthcare providers to spread the word.
- Provide behavioral health first aid training to community members, especially teachers and businesses or organizations that interface with community (such as librarians and retailers). This training provides the skills to recognize signs of mental distress, offer support, and connect those in need with appropriate resources. The training can be an existing program, such as Mental Health First Aid.

<b>Lead</b>
The Center for Health Innovation
<b>Resources</b>
<u>SAMHSA – Cooperative Agreements for Innovative Community Crisis Response Partnerships</u>
<u>SAMHSA – Resiliency in Communities After Stress and Trauma</u>
<u>Mental Health First Aid</u>
<u>The New Mexico Foundation – Sustaining New Mexico Fund</u>

# Behavioral Health Awareness

Stigma can have deadly consequences, particularly in relation to suicide. Stigma surrounding behavioral health often acts as a barrier that prevents individuals from seeking and accessing appropriate treatment. Fear of judgment, discrimination, or being labeled as "weak" or "crazy" can prevent people from reaching out for help.

When individuals feel comfortable discussing their behavioral health challenges openly, they are more likely to recognize symptoms, seek help at the earliest signs, and engage in proactive self-care. Early intervention can prevent the escalation of behavioral health issues and lead to improved long-term outcomes. By reducing stigma, individuals are more likely to seek timely and effective treatment, leading to improved outcomes and overall well-being. De-stigmatizing behavioral health in Grant County can create an environment where people feel safe and encouraged to seek help, potentially reducing the rates of suicide, homicide, and self-harm.

## Suggested Behavioral Health Awareness Programs and Initiatives

- **Teach Behavioral Health Literacy:** Provide a free behavioral health literacy course for community members to increase awareness and understanding of behavioral health conditions. Educate individuals to recognize signs of distress in themselves and others, offer support, and promote a culture of empathy and acceptance. This can be bundled with behavioral health training.
- **Conduct an Awareness Campaign:** Create a community-wide awareness campaign. Enlist a wide number of partners to participate, and provide them with an informational packet inviting them to promote information about behavioral health—in schools, workplaces, businesses, and community spaces. Provide accurate information about behavioral health conditions, their prevalence, and the importance of seeking help as broadly throughout the community as possible.
- **Facilitate Dialogue:** Host discussions, support groups, or town hall meetings where individuals can share their experiences and challenges related to behavioral health. This helps create a safe space for people to talk openly without fear of judgment or discrimination.
- **Celebrity and Community Role Models:** Engage celebrities, local influencers, and community leaders who have experience with behavioral health challenges to share their stories openly. Their willingness to discuss their struggles and the positive impact of seeking help can inspire others to do the same.

### Action Steps

- Collaborate with behavioral health professionals in the community to identify the messaging they recommend promoting in the community.
- Map the behavioral health resources across the region and the state; and identify ways to communicate those resources to residents.
- Determine timing for programs and promotional events. Reference existing awareness days for themed campaign ideas (e.g. National Mental Health Awareness Month in May, and World Mental Health Awareness Day on October 10<sup>th</sup>).

<b>Lead</b>
Grant County
<b>Resources</b>
<u>Medline Community Impact Grant Program</u>
<u>SAMHSA – Advancing Wellness &amp; Resiliency in Education</u>
<u>U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services – Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children’s Health</u>

# Housing

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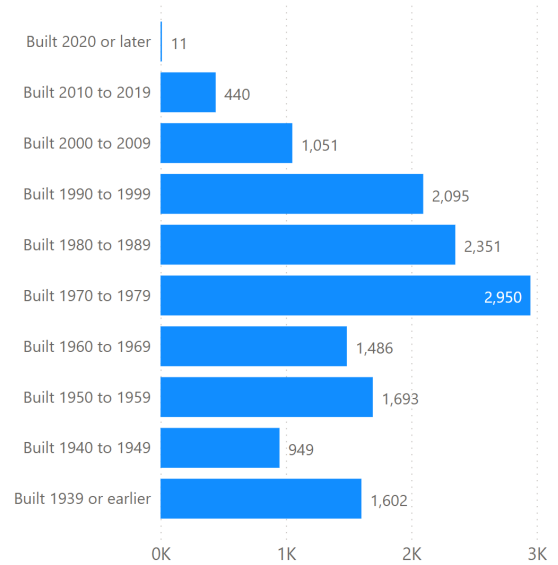
Healthy living conditions are vital for individuals to thrive both physically and mentally. When people have access to safe and suitable housing, it positively impacts their overall well-being and quality of life. Adequate housing provides a foundation for physical health by offering protection from environmental hazards, such as pollution and extreme weather conditions. It also promotes mental well-being by creating a secure and stable environment that allows individuals to feel a sense of belonging and safety. Healthy living conditions encompass factors such as proper ventilation, sanitation, and sufficient space, all of which contribute to a healthier lifestyle. Without these conditions, individuals may be more susceptible to respiratory problems, stress, and other health issues. Therefore, ensuring healthy living conditions through affordable and accessible housing is essential for fostering the optimal growth, development, and happiness of individuals within a community.

# Likelihood of Occurrence

## Housing

The majority of the housing in Grant County is aging stock, due to relatively few units being constructed in the past two decades. If not maintained well, aging housing stock presents deterioration and safety concerns that can impact the well-being of individuals and communities. Over time, older homes can deteriorate, leading to structural issues, worn-out materials, and outdated electrical or plumbing systems. These conditions can pose safety hazards, such as weakened foundations, mold growth, lead-based paint, or faulty wiring, which can endanger the health and well-being of occupants.

Housing Units by Year Built



## Anticipated Impact

The lack of healthy and affordable housing can have significant impacts on a community across various aspects of life. Potential impacts include:

- **Health issues** such as respiratory problems, allergies, and mental health issues can be caused by inadequate housing conditions, such as overcrowding, poor ventilation, and exposure to pollutants.
- **Housing affordability challenges** financially burden individuals and families, leaving them with less disposable income to meet other basic needs. This can lead to financial instability and a cycle of poverty within the community.
- **Reduced economic development** due to insufficient affordable housing as it deters businesses and workers from moving to the area. If workers cannot find affordable housing near their place of work, it can lead to longer commutes or prevent them from being able to access work opportunities; while businesses generally locate in proximity to workers and/or clients.

## Resilience Strategies

Action	Lead	Resources	Timeline
Housing Working Group	Grant County	New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority – Restoring Our Communities	Short
		New Mexico Housing Trust Fund	

# Housing Working Group

A housing working group can play a vital role in helping Grant County be proactive about addressing its housing needs by fostering collaboration and driving meaningful action toward addressing the housing needs of the community. Suggested points of focus for the housing working group to target include:

- **Housing Plan:** The 2010 Silver City Housing Plan has enabled the town to tackle their housing challenges. An effort to create a County-wide Housing Plan is underway, and the working group can support to the completion of this plan. Plans for the mining district communities of Bayard, Hurley, and Santa Clara would also be helpful.
- **Policy Development:** Collaborate with local officials to advocate for and develop housing policies that address the housing needs identified in the County Housing Plan. This may include zoning changes, affordable housing ordinances and incentives, ordinances preventing landlord discrimination, or regulations ensuring safe and healthy housing.
- **Partnerships and Collaboration:** Forge partnerships with housing developers, nonprofit organizations, financial institutions, and other stakeholders to leverage resources and expertise. These collaborations can lead to the creation of affordable housing initiatives, construction training programs, financing options to support housing development, rehabilitation initiatives for deteriorated homes, or promotion of alternative models for ownership such as communal land trusts.

For increased efficacy, the County should consider hiring a staff position to run the Working Group and oversee a broad variety of housing initiatives. This person would also create:

- **A central hub for housing resources and services:** This hub can connect residents with financial assistance programs, housing counseling, or home repair services, providing community members access to needed support.
- **Evaluation and Monitoring:** Establish key indicators to track the progress and impact of housing initiatives. Regular evaluation allows for adjustments and improvements to strategies to effectively address the community's evolving housing needs.

## Action Steps

- Create County staff position to coordinate and oversee County’s housing initiatives.
- Identify potential community members and regional partners to invite to participate in the working group. Include members from the public sector (nonprofits and governments) and from the private sector (real estate agents and developers)—as the participation of both groups is needed to maximize the group’s efficacy.
- Schedule recurring meetings, and at each meeting provide clear objectives on what the group is trying to achieve. Use these discussions to identify specific strategies to pursue.

<b>Lead</b>
SWNMCOG
<b>Resources</b>
<a href="#">New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority – Restoring Our Communities</a>
<a href="#">New Mexico Housing Trust Fund</a>
<a href="#">USDA Housing Programs</a>
<b>Housing and Urban Development (HUD)</b>
<b>Service providers</b>